

**City of Belmont
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MARCH 3, 2010
MINUTES**

The regular meeting of the Belmont Parks & Recreation Commission of March 3, 2010 was called to order at 7:02 p.m.

I. ROLL CALL

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair King, Vice Chair Andrews, Youth Commissioner Wheeler, Commissioners Susan Wright, Bortoli, Cheechov and Youth Commissioner Kayla Wright.

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Sullivan

STAFF PRESENT: Parks and Recreation Director (PRD) Gervais, Recreation Specialist (RS) Guluzzy, Parks Manager (PM) Ourtiague and Secretary Saggau

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Cheechov requested that in Questions and Comments it be noted Chair King donated some colored paper to the Department for use in the Commission packet. Secretary Saggau noted minor grammatical corrections that would be made to the minutes. Commissioner Bortoli moved, seconded by Vice Chair Andrews, to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of February 3, 2010 with the changes noted. Vote 8-0 in favor.

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION/COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Bortoli reported on the Senior Mobility Steering Committee. They are looking into government agency vehicles that are not being used to determine if they could be used for senior transportation.

PRD Gervais noted several upcoming events.

- Commission Appreciation Dinner – Friday, March 5 at the Senior/Community Center
- Opening Day for BRSYSA on Saturday, March 6 at the Sports Complex. Little League canceled their Opening Day Ceremonies due to wet field conditions.
- Opportunity to speak with City Manager Recruiter at the Lodge on March 9.
- Spring Craft Faire in Twin Pines Park on Saturday, March 27
- Egg Adventure Hunt on April 3 in Twin Pines Park
- Tentative date for the Mayor's State of the City address in conjunction with the Bike Bridge Groundbreaking Ceremony is April 11
- Commissioners Workshop will be on April 17th from 9am-1pm at Twin Pines Park

PRD Gervais introduced Laura Guluzzy, Recreation Specialist at the Senior & Community Center. RS Guluzzy said she is currently a student at Notre De Namur University studying for a human services degree; and would like to eventually get a doctorate in gerontology. She noted the importance of addressing the needs for seniors and reviewed some of the projects she is working on.

Vice Chair Andrews reported on the Sports Advisory Committee meeting. He noted the Grant requests for Davey Glen and the Sports Complex have been signed and sent to Sacramento. He noted a request has been made to Anna Eshoo to request additional stimulus funding for the Sports Complex to add on to the Pedestrian/Bike Bridge. Vice Chair Andrews stated the Committee met with Verdi Designs, an engineering and architectural firm, to discuss different options and methods of installing artificial turf. They discussed different materials that can be used including organic products for the base. They also talked about a recycle buy back when the top is replaced. Vice Chair Andrews reported the new cork-type flooring has been installed in the Conference Center. He added the Youth Sports Organizations are making donations to cover the cost of replacing the lobby floor.

IV. AGENDA AMENDMENTS

None.

V. OLD BUSINESS

a. Recommendation for Final Design of Semeria Park

PRD Gervais left the room for this report.

Chair King advised that the Commission is not intending to redesign the park but to go with the plans already made with a few changes.

Parks Manager Ourtiague reported on the progress on the Semeria Park project and reviewed the comments outlined in the staff report that were made by Commissioners regarding the project.

PM Ourtiague explained the soil analysis for the slope stability and the three different options recommended to stabilize it. A diagram of the proposed park plan was displayed in the presentation outlining the area that would be lost. The least expensive option was to grade 2 to 1 at an estimated cost of \$65,000 and was the staff's recommendation.

PM Ourtiague requested the Commission discuss and make a recommendation on five items described in detail with staff recommendations under Discussion in the staff report. These items included:

1. Seats and size of swing set
2. Elimination of some of the hardscapes/pathways
3. Shade structure over the picnic table area
4. Number of parking spaces
5. Slope Stabilization Measure.

PM Ourtiague explained after receiving feedback from the Commission he will meet with the Landscape Architect to finalize the design with the intention of bringing this item back to the Commission in April and to the City Council on April 27. If it is approved by the City Council then staff could prepare construction documents and solicit bids for the project. It is anticipated that construction on this project could begin in late summer.

Responding to Commission questions the following was clarified:

- Staff does not recommend the City provide shade umbrellas for the tables as it is typically not successful in a park setting due to vandalism.
- Playground safety regulations do not permit a mix use of swings within a bay.
- The play structure design options are limited due to the size of the park. Staff and the landscape architect have met with playground manufacturers to meet the request for a structure that can accommodate a larger range of ages and include a shade cover.
- A four swing structure could include two bays – with one bay having two straps and the other bay having two buckets seats. Eliminating some of the pathway would make it more likely the two bays would fit in the area.
- The verbal preliminary estimate for a shade structure over the table area is \$40,000 and will impact the overall design significantly.
- Elimination of two parking spaces would gain an area of 320 square feet.
- The useable park space is approximately 11,000 square feet.
- Small discussion tables will be included in the revised plans
- Larger trees could be purchased to provide shade sooner.
- If only one parking space remains it is required that it is handicapped.

Mike Bushue expressed opposition to the park due to the loss of parking spaces.

Donna Briscoe agreed that parking is crucial for the neighborhood. She was in favor of the park but noted street parking is needed for visitors and residents. She spoke in favor of the installation of landscaping beside her property but expressed concern that it be maintained and watered. She questioned if traffic bumpers were considered for the site to slow down traffic in the neighborhood.

Chair King requested the Commission provide general comments prior to making recommendations on the five items.

Youth Commissioner Kayla Wright suggested the picnic table near the play structure be changed to a discussion table.

Vice Chair Andrews noted this park is not a destination park but a neighborhood park so parking is not needed. He preferred strap swings be installed to accommodate a larger age range if it is not possible to include two bays with both types of swings. He would like to see the hardscape between the play structure and the swings eliminated to provide more room for the play structure. He was not in favor of using umbrellas but would like to see a couple more tables installed. He suggested switching the picnic table location to the back bringing the play structure up front.

Commissioner Cheechov agreed if only one type of swing could be installed that they be strap swings. She preferred the play structure be enlarged to accommodate children aged 2-12 and the pathway between the swings and the play structure be removed to provide more space. Commissioner Cheechov requested that the play structure colors remain neutral – tan, brown and green. She spoke in favor of eliminating the two parking spaces and noted if a house were built at that site no parking spaces would have been provided. She would like there to be more conversation tables.

Commissioner Bortoli preferred that there be four swings, but if only two are possible that they be strap swings. He agreed the path in the middle should be removed to provide more space. He said he would like to see a second parking space to make it easier for elders that cannot walk a long distance but do not have a handicapped plate. He questioned if another 160 square feet would provide that much more space for the park. He agreed with including more conversation tables. He explained that since not many people would drive to this park it should not affect traffic. He noted in the past when park improvements were made neighbors were concerned with an increase in visitors but that has not happened.

Commissioner Susan Wright noted the residents had requested that the play structure be as large as possible but also distinctive. She requested imaginary play and a natural look be considered when selecting a play structure. She questioned what size trees would be planted in the park and PM Ourtiague said that 24” box trees would be planted and they will be strategically placed to provide some shade.

Youth Commissioner Wheeler stated she preferred more conversation tables instead of picnic tables. She would like to see four swings but if not possible, strap swings would be the most practical.

In response to Commissioner Cheechov’s question PR Ourtiague explained shrubs and plant material will be planted along the slope. To avoid ground saturation drip irrigation will be installed to water plants until they are established. For the remainder of the slope he recommends a wildflower mix be planted.

The Commission reviewed the five items that staff requested recommendations for and came to the consensus as follows:

1. Preferred two bucket and two strap swings be included. If not possible two straps be installed.
2. Eliminate enough hardscape to enlarge the play area but keep a continuous path.
3. Following discussion the Commission agreed the shade structure does not need to be included at this time. It could be pursued in the future.
4. Following discussion the Commission took a vote on the number of parking spaces.
 - Two parking spaces with one handicapped – 3 votes
 - One handicapped parking space only – 4 votes
5. Recommended the least expensive slope stabilization – Option #1.

PM Ourtiague said he would meet with the Landscape Architect and they will do the best they can to meet all these recommendations in the final design.

The Commission took a brief recess.

b. Establishing an Ad Hoc Committee for the Davey Glen Park Project

Chair King confirmed that the Commissioners have read or agreed to read the email from Terri Cook concerning Davey Glen Park.

PRD Gervais noted he has pushed hard for this project and that the ideas presented may not be what the community wants for this project. He requested help from the Commission to find out what the right features are for this park by setting up a Subcommittee. He noted new ideas have been suggested and he would like to be able to share them with a Subcommittee and get some feedback. He noted that the Subcommittee could not consist of more than four Commissioners and he recommended that they meet at a regular time. He suggested he could keep brief minutes from these meetings and keep the entire Commission informed by including these minutes in their packets. He noted these meeting would be open to the public.

Commissioner Cheechov spoke in favor of minutes being included in the packet and she would like the opportunity to ask questions to the Ad-Hoc Committee. PRD Gervais noted they could do a report at the meeting similar to the other Committees reports.

Vice Chair Andrews questioned if there would be an opportunity for residents to give input or be a part of the Sub-Committee. Commissioner Bortoli noted the meetings could be open to the public and they could be posted on the City's website and suggested keeping a set time initially. Vice Chair Andrews explained he would like to have members of the public to be a part of the project planning.

Commissioner Susan Wright stated she viewed this as more of a working Committee that would work on ideas and get them ready for the Commission to review. She noted the Commission has already completed a lot of work but that the Sub-Committee could get more details on items such as costs and specific ideas to make it easier for the Commission to vote on them. She would like the Subcommittee to meet more often than once a month so that this project can move more quickly.

Chair King noted if the Commission decided to only include Commissioners in the Ad-Hoc Committee residents could be invited to these meetings by sending out a press release and posting on the web site. She preferred not to add active members as that would start the process over again. She recommended that if four people are appointed to this Subcommittee two be selected tonight and two more at the next meeting after the Commission appointments are made.

Chair King read an email from Commissioner Sullivan who was unable to attend the meeting stating he would like to be a member of the Davey Glen Subcommittee. Commissioner Susan Wright also wanted to be a member of the Sub-Committee. It appeared there was consensus that Commissioner Sullivan and Commissioner Wright would be appointed to the Subcommittee.

The Commission decided to wait until the next Commission meeting in April to assign the members to the Ad Hoc Committee with the rest of the Commission assignments.

Jim Callan stated he has applied for a seat on the Park & Recreation Commission meeting. He is interested in Davey Glen Park and if he is appointed he would like to be a part of the Ad-Hoc Committee.

Paul O'Leary questioned if a soil analysis will be done for Davey Glen Park and PRD Gervais replied that there would be.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

None.

VII. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

A. Questions and Comments

PRD Gervais reported the grant applications for the Sports Complex and Davey Glen have been submitted to the State.

PRD Gervais noted the City Council will review budget corrections strategies at their March 9th meeting and they may act on that on March 23rd. They will have a special meeting on March 30th to review the Priority Calendar. He reminded the Commission they may want to consider assigning one member to speak for the Commission on these items.

PRD reported there was tree planting event at McDougal Park on February 20th which was well attended. Many neighbors and the 4-H participated.

Chair King noted the two Youth Commissioners have reapplied for the Commission but in case they are not reappointed they had something to say to the Commission. Youth Commissioner Kayla Wright expressed thanks for the opportunity to serve on the Commission. She stated it was a great opportunity and an unforgettable experience. Youth Commissioner Wheeler also expressed appreciation for the opportunity to serve on the Commission. She noted it has been a really good experience. Commissioner Cheechov added the Commission has enjoyed having them and their contributions on the Commission and hopes they will be back.

Commissioner Susan Wright questioned if a member would be appointed to represent the Commission during budget discussion. Chair King noted she would be in attendance and could answer questions. Commissioner Bortoli noted there was some concern on special events and the impact to other groups and questioned if the Commission could come up with a consensus on which events they would like see saved. He noted it would be helpful to be able to review the costs of each event. PRD Gervais explained all the details are included in the report that would soon be available to review. It was recommended that the Commission look at the report and then they could decide if they want to assign someone to speak for them. It was noted Commissioners could read the report and could send an email to Council if they had concerns on specific items.

B. Future Agenda Items

Commission Assignments
Park Survey Results

Cipriani Dog Park
Non-Profit Foundations
Davey Glen Park
Semeria Park

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Jonathan Gervais
Parks & Recreation Director

DRAFT